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MACEDONIA

SNAPSHOT

Macedonian Teachers Win European Grand Prix

USAID/Microsoft partnership promotes innovative teaching



The Macedonia team's poster for the Innovative Education Forum

"Of all the wonderful examples of projects linking technology, innovation and teaching, our project, our effort, OUR COUNTRY won!" – Marina Vasilevska, member of the winning team

Telling Our Story

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A group of USAID-trained teachers from Macedonia won the European Grand Prix, part of Microsoft Corp.'s Innovative Education Forum held March 21-25, 2011, in Moscow. For the winning project, *Grandma's Games*, teachers from five schools collaborated to introduce today's youth to forgotten games their grandparents played.

The teachers used information and communication technology to reintroduce these games to students across Macedonia. Under the direction of their teachers, students from each participating school conducted research on games their grandparents played when growing up, wrote about them, videoed them being played, and shared the information with students from other schools. The teachers linked each game to specific curriculum objectives, providing students with opportunities for integrated learning.

This award-winning effort is the culmination of USAID's work to support the Macedonian Government's efforts to computerize all the country's primary schools. Macedonia provided all primary schools with computers, while USAID helped connect the schools to the Internet, trained teachers on the effective use of technology in the classroom, provided digital content, and introduced innovative uses of information and communication technology such as those showcased at the Microsoft Innovative Education Forum.

To enhance this work, USAID established a partnership with Microsoft Partners in Learning (PIL) to showcase and celebrate innovative uses of technology in Macedonian schools. The PIL program organizes Innovative Education Forums in more than 100 countries, with the winners going on to regional competitions such as the European Forum in Moscow. Regional winners advance to the annual global competition. These events offer the most innovative teachers a chance to share creative ideas that can make teaching and learning more interesting, fun and effective.

Grandma's Games competed against 84 projects from 41 countries, and won the Grand Prix in the Educators' Choice category, voted on by all participating contestants. *Grandma's Games* will now go on to compete as a European representative at the global competition in Washington, D.C. later this year. Following the success of *Grandma's Games* in Moscow, teachers from Spain, Italy and the Netherlands have expressed interest in collaborating with the Macedonian teachers on future innovative education activities. All 10 teachers involved in *Grandma's Games* are "Master Trainers" who were trained by USAID. These teachers lead many of the Agency's professional development activities that have helped improve teaching and learning in primary schools across the country.